

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 011611

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, MX

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS: IS MEXICO ENTERING A "TURKEY PHASE?"

REF: MEXICO 252

LA PAZ FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE

1. YOUR INSIGHTS OF REFTTEL ARE MUCH APPRECIATED. IT IS JUST THIS KIND OF THOUGHTFUL AUGURING OF POTENTIAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF FAST BREAKING EVENTS, ACCOMPLISHED DESPITE THE HEAVY DEMANDS OF EVERYDAY OPERATIONS, WHICH IS SO ESSENTIAL FOR OUR CONTINGENCY PLANNING. THE POINTS YOU RAISE MUST BE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY, BUT SOME INITIAL REACTIONS FOLLOW.

2. CROP SUBSTITUTION WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO DEVELOP INTO A  
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VIABLE PROGRAM IN MEXICO IN VIEW OF THE INACCESSIBLE AREAS

WHERE POPPY PLANTS ARE GROWN AND THE FACT THAT MUCH OF THE LAND INVOLVED IN ILLICIT POPPY CULTIVATION IS ILLEGALLY HELD FEDERAL PROPERTY. RELOCATION EFFORTS AS ONE ASPECT OF A CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM MIGHT BE CONSIDERED, AS WILL OTHER MEANS FOR TURNING THE POPPY AND MARIJUANA GROWING PEASANTS TOWARD MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITY. IN ANY EVENT IF THE GOM NOW OFFICIALLY VIEWS THE DRUG PROGRAM AS

PART OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM, WE HAVE DEFINITELY GAINED BY ITS ELEVATION IN IMPORTANCE IN THE GOM, AND THE INCREASED COMMITMENT THAT THIS SHOULD ENTAIL.

3. A RELATED CONCERN ARISES FROM THE POSSIBILITY WE CAN ENVISAGE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO MIGHT, IN AN EFFORT TO MEET CONCURRENTLY SEVERAL PERCEIVED DESIRABLE OBJECTIVES, DECIDE MEXICO SHOULD GO INTO LICIT OPIUM PRODUCTION. THE PERCEIVED OBJECTIVES WOULD INCLUDE (A) THE ECONOMIC WELFARE OF THE AFFECTED CAMPESINOS; (B) THE AVOIDANCE OF THE RURAL UNREST AND SERIOUS DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF OFFENDING THOSE NOW GROWING (AS RELATED TO YOU BY MARQUIS CHILDS); (C) THE CREATION IN MEXICO OF ITS OWN NATIONAL AND INDEPENDENT LEGITIMATE NARCOTICS (MORPHINE, CODINE) SUPPLY SOURCE, AND (D) SOME FOREIGN EXCHANGE SAVINGS. IF CULTIVATION WERE LEGALIZED AND AN ALKALOIDS PLANT BUILT LOCALLY TO PROCESS FOR DOMESTIC USE EITHER OPIUM GUM OBTAINED BY POPPY POD INCISION OR, ALTERNATELY, THE ENTIRE POPPY PODS (STRAW PROCESS), THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD (INCB) WOULD HAVE NO LEGAL BASIS IN THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG TREATY SYSTEM FOR OPPOSING THAT ACTION. AND, WE BELIEVE, SOME NATIONALISTIC ELEMENTS IN MEXICO WOULD REGARD IT AS A GREAT IDEA.

4. OUR FIRM AND LONG-HELD POSITION IS THAT NO NATION, ASIDE FROM THOSE HAVING PROVEN CONVINCINGLY THAT THEY CAN ADEQUATELY CONTROL, SHOULD ENGAGE IN ANY NARCOTICS PRODUCTION. A KEY ELEMENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL PATTERN SINCE THE EARLY 1900'S IS THE LIMITATION OF THE PLACES AS WELL AS AMOUNTS OF NARCOTICS RAW MATERIALS PRODUCED. THIS APPROACH IS AKIN IN SOME IMPOR-

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TANT RESPECTS TO OUR POSITION ON NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION.

5. NOW AS TO TURKEY, IT HAS BEEN A LONG-TIME PRODUCER OF LICIT NARCOTIC DRUGS RECOGNIZED AS SUCH BY THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD. IT INSTITUTED ITS PRODUCTION BAN IN 1972 AS A RESULT OF WELL KNOWN PRESSURES AND INDUCEMENTS BUT ESSENTIALLY IN RECOGNITION OF THE FACT, CITED INTER ALIA BY THE INCB, THAT IT HAD NOT RE-

PEAT NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY CONTROLLING PRODUCTION AND  
THUS PREVENTING DIVERSION OF NARCOTIC RAW MATERIALS TO  
THE TRAFFICKERS. THE LACK OF CONTROL RESULTED FROM A  
FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO CONTROL IN DEALING  
ESSENTIALLY WITH LONG STANDING POPPY FARMERS IN KNOWN  
AND READILY ACCESSIBLE AREAS LOCATED IN TRADITIONALLY  
LICENSED OPIUM GROWING PROVINCES. NOW, HAVING ACCEPTED  
THE COMMITMENT, AND PRIMARILY WITH THE USE OF ITS OWN  
RESOURCES, THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT HAS EVIDENCED ADEQUATE  
CONTROL DURING THE 1975 CROP YEAR.

6. WE SEE THE SITUATION IN MEXICO AS FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT. THERE IS NO TRADITION OF WORLD-APPROVED PRODUCTION OPERATING UNDER A NATIONAL LICENSING SYSTEM. MORE IMPORTANTLY, FOR GEOGRAPHIC REASONS THE GOM WOULD HAVE AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK WERE IT TO TRY TO CONTROL SOME QUANTUM OF LICIT PRODUCTION IN THE REMOTE AREAS WHERE CAMPESINOS ARE GROWING.

7. SHOULD THE QUESTION ARISE (WHICH WE FERVENTLY HOPE WILL NOT BE THE CASE) WE WOULD ADAMANTLY MAINTAIN THAT THE TURKISH POPPY CULTIVATION EXPERIENCE IS NOT REPEAT NOT AN EXAMPLE FOR WHAT MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE IN MEXICO. INTRODUCTION OF OTHER FEASIBLE CROPS IN THE AFFECTED AREAS AS PART OF AN OVERALL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IS OF COURSE A DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT MATTER, TO BE EXAMINED ON ITS OWN GROUND.

8. THEREFORE SHOULD, AS YOU INDICATE WOULD BE LIKELY, WE HEAR MORE FROM THE GOM ABOUT THE ECONOMIC/POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE DRUG CONTROL AND ERADICATION CAMPAIGN, PLEASE BEAR IN MIND IT IS CLEARLY IN OUR INTEREST TO DIRECT THE THINKING TOTALLY TO OTHER INCOME POSSIBILITIES.

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TIES AND TO NIP IN THE BUD ANY THOUGHT OF LEGALIZED CAMPESINO INCOME FROM THE POPPY BY WHATEVER PROCESS (GUM OPIUM OR STRAW).

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## Message Attributes

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